

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY S: J MOSSELLEM

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S E C R E T STATE 227040 TOSEC 270063

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FOR COVEY FROM MOSSELLEM

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: RUMSFELD LETTER

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF RUMSFELD LETTER DATED 13 SEPTEMBER,
1976 :

DEAR HENRY:

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATUS OF MILITARY BASE NEGOTIA-
TIONS WITH THE PHILIPPINES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF
THESE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE OPERATIONS OF OUR BASES AT SUBIC
AND CLARK. THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO VIEW THE
UNHAMPERED OPERATION OF THESE BASES AS NECESSARY TO OUR AIR
AND NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AND INDIAN
OCEAN AREAS. IN ADDITION I RECOGNIZE THAT WE HAVE A
POLITICAL STAKE IN THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS
AS A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR ABILITY TO RETAIN A SIGNIFICANT

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U.S. PRESENCE IN THE REGION.

WE HAD HOPED THAT THE INITIATIVES BEGUN BY PRESIDENT FORD IN MANILA LAST DECEMBER AND YOUR EFFORTS, INCLUDING THE PRESENTATION OF A FORTHCOMING DRAFT AGREEMENT TO SECRETARY ROMULO LAST APRIL, WOULD SET THE STAGE FOR A SUCCESSFUL

NEGOTIATION BASED ON A MUTUALITY OF INTERESTS. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED FOR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE 1947 BASES AGREEMENT BUT I WAS SHOCKED BY THE EXTENT OF THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE PHILIPPINE DRAFT OF JUNE 15. MY CONCERN GREW WITH THE LACK OF SUBSTANTIAL MOVEMENT BY THE PHILIPPINES FROM THESE HARD LINE POSITIONS DESPITE U.S. EFFORTS TO BE ACCOMMODATING AND WITH THE ADDITIONAL DEMANDS FOR AMPLIFICATION OF OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE COMMITMENT MADE BY PRESIDENT MARCOS TO DEPUTY SECRETARY ROBINSON IN AUGUST. WE NOTE THAT MARCOS HAS IMPOSED CONDITIONS ON YOUR POSSIBLE VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES IN OCTOBER AND HAS BEEN BACKTRACKING FROM HIS REQUEST FOR A MEETING BETWEEN SECRETARY ROMULO AND YOURSELF HERE THIS MONTH.

IN VIEW OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS I DON'T BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE WITH UNREQUITED EFFORTS AT ACCOMMODATION. THERE ARE FEW CONCESSIONS WE CAN STILL MAKE FROM THE U.S. POSITION BEFORE WE BEGIN SERIOUSLY TO HAMPER BASE OPERATIONS. WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER TO RETAIN OUR LIMITED REMAINING FLEXIBILITY UNTIL AN AGREEMENT IS IN SIGHT?

OUR NEGOTIATORS HAVE A DIFFICULT TASK. WE DO HAVE NEED FOR THE BASES. BUT WE DO HAVE LEVERAGE. BEYOND THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS WHICH FLOW TO THE PHILIPPINES THERE IS THE FACT THAT U.S. PRESENCE IN THE PACIFIC IS STABILIZING AND OUR ABSENCE WOULD CREATE A VACUUM. MARCOS' APPARENT DECISIONS TO GO SLOWLY IN NEGOTIATIONS AND TO PLACE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DELAY ON THE UNITED STATES COMPLICATE THE NEGOTIATOR'S TASKS. YOUR WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH MARCOS AND ROMULO EFFECTIVELY MEETS THIS CHALLENGE. LET US HOPE THAT THE GOP WILL BE RESPONSIVE TO THIS LATEST INITIATIVE. IF THEY ARE NOT, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD AVOID REINFORCING THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR NEED FOR THE BASES IS UNMATCHED BY THE PHILIPPINE NEED FOR US TO BE THERE

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AND INSTEAD LET THE NEGOTIATIONS WIND DOWN AT A PACE ESTABLISHED BY THE PHILIPPINES.

I WOULD BE HAPPY TO JOIN YOU IN MEETING WITH ROMULO LATER THIS MONTH IF THE PHILIPPINES DESIRE SUCH A MEETING ON OUR DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP.

SINCERELY, DONALD RUMSFELD. END TEXT. ROBINSON

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